

Coast will provide a test case, as it will be the first African-governed state to become eligible for Commonwealth membership, and its treatment will set a precedent for that of other African states as they emerge.

2. In the past no exception has ever been taken to a new member. The only possible ground for other members refusing to accept it would have been that it had not in fact been granted full self-government. The Canadian Government at first hesitated over Ceylon, owing to doubts as to the effect on its independence of the agreement on bases and external affairs which it would be expected to sign; but these doubts were resolved on further study of the agreement, and no objection was raised.

3. A general election will be held in the Gold Coast on July 17, 1956, to determine whether Prime Minister Nkrumah's constitutional proposals have the support of the electorate. The United Kingdom Government has announced that it would accept a motion calling for independence within the Commonwealth, passed by a "reasonable majority" in the new Legislature, and then would be prepared to declare a firm date for the attainment of this purpose. This timetable makes Gold Coast independence early in 1957 (under a new name, "Ghana") a realistic prospect.

4. In announcing these plans, the Secretary of State for the Colonies made explicit reference to the supposed basic principle that, while the granting and timing of independence is the responsibility of the United Kingdom, admission to full membership in the Commonwealth requires the consent of all the existing members. This alleged principle is a new thing in Commonwealth procedure which has never been tested, though at the time of the admission of India and Pakistan Canada was disposed to feel that some means should be devised to get the consent of all members. The dilemma is that, if any criterion for membership other than the attainment of self-government is imposed, either the other members would have to say to the United Kingdom: "You must continue to govern this dependency instead of liberating it as you wish to do", or they must advocate the creation of a limbo within the Commonwealth, to which states would be consigned which the present members do not wish to associate with — a limbo consisting of independent states which are within the Commonwealth but not members of it. It is difficult to believe that any self-respecting state would remain within the Commonwealth on such terms.

5. Preliminary consideration of the whole problem at the forthcoming Prime Ministers' Meeting seems desirable.

6. No specific procedure for admission of the Gold Coast has been proposed. However, the United Kingdom Government is publicly committed to supporting its claim to membership, and is plainly intent on securing agreement to admitting the Gold Coast simultaneously with the achievement of independence. To this end, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been kept fully informed, on a private basis, about constitutional developments in the colony. It has been felt that undue emphasis on, or publicity about, the transition to independence and full Commonwealth membership would intensify South African opposition to admission of the Gold Coast. The position of the Union, however, has become less intransigent in recent months. Prime Minister Strijdom and the Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Eric Louw, have both made public professions of their Government's desire to have friendly relations with non-European governments in Africa; and there is now hope that the Union will assume an attitude of at least tacit acceptance of the claim of an independent Gold Coast to membership in the Commonwealth. The views of Australia, New Zealand and Asian members are not expected to conflict with those of the United Kingdom.